

TAKING CARE OF A SICK PERSON IN YOUR HOME

Influenza viruses are thought to spread from person to person in droplets from coughing and sneezing. The sneeze or cough is propelled through the air and lands on another person nearby or on an object. The other person may then touch the droplets and spread them to their mouth or nose.

When taking care of a sick household member with influenza, the most important ways to protect yourself and others are to:

- Keep the sick person away from other people as much as possible
- Remind the sick person to cover their coughs, and clean their hands with soap and water often. An alcohol-based hand cleanser can be used if soap and water are not available.
- Have everyone in the household clean their hands often.
- If a family member is at high risk (pregnant or with an underlying chronic disease) consider calling their doctor for advice.
- If close contact (within 6 feet) is unavoidable, consider wearing a facemask.

Where should the sick person stay?

- Keep the sick person in a room separate from the common area of the house and keep the door closed.
- Sick people should stay home until they have had no fever for 24 hours. This is to keep from spreading the flu.
- If people with the flu have to leave home they should wear a facemask if possible.
- If possible they should use a separate bathroom

What medicines can I use to treat my child?

- Antiviral medications are not used universally in people with influenza. There are specific groups that are at higher risk of a complicated infection and your doctor will make that decision.
- Do not give aspirin to children or teenagers who have the flu
- Children with the flu can take medicines without aspirin such as acetaminophen and ibuprofen to relieve symptoms.
- Nasal saline rinses can be helpful with congestion
- Sore throats can be soothed with lozenges in those over 4 years of age.

What if my child seems worse?

Influenza infections can lead to bacterial infections. If your child seems to have a more severe or prolonged illness or an illness that seems to get better and then worse again, talk to your health care provider.

- Get medical care if the sick person at home:
 - has difficulty breathing or chest pain
 - has purple or blue discoloration of the lips
 - is vomiting and unable to stay hydrated
 - does not have regular urination or lack of tears in infants
 - is less responsive than normal or becomes confused

